(b) if so, the main causes for massive increase; and

(c) the preventive steps Government propose to take for arresting the increase?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c)According to Indian Council of Medical Research, the estimated number of diabetic patients in the country is about 25 million. There is epidemiological evidence showing increase in prevalence of diabetes, particularly in urban areas of the country. As per World Health Organisation projections, India will have 57 million diabetic by the year 2025 when India will become the country to have the largest number of diabetic patients. The various combined factors like population ageing, unhealthy diets and obesity and sedentary life style are mainly reported to be responsible for increase in diabetes mellitus.

Diabetes treatment is done at all levels in the rural health care delivery system and urban health care institutions. A pilot project on "Strengthening of Bio-Chemical Laboratories and Quality Assurance" was initiated in 1999-2000 in the States of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Punjab. The National Diabetes Control Programme has now been merged with the Indian Council of Medical Research which has constituted as Expert Group to formulate a revised comprehensive plan of action to control diabetes. Central Health Education Bureau (CHEB) has also strategies/programme including use of powerful electronic media to spread health messages to increase Public Health Awareness about diabetes.

Improving the sex ratio

3521. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the marked fall in the sex ratio in different States as revealed by the last Census, Government have issued any directions to State Governments concerned to improve the sex ratio;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the State Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) As soon as the figures of Census 2001 became available showing fall in sex ratio, Dr. C.P. Thakur, Minister

of Health and Family Welfare addressed letters to the Chief Ministers of all the States drawing their attention to these figures requesting them to take all necessary steps to improve the sex ratio in their respective States. All the States and Union territories have also been requested to take steps to effectively implement the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 and to generate awareness about the provisions of the Act among doctors, law enforcing agencies as well as general public to eradicate the evil of female foeticide, so that sex ratio could be improved.

Dr. C.P. Thakur, Minister for Health and Family Welfare has also addressed a letter to over two lakh doctors all over the country, requesting them to extend their help and co-operate in the eradication of the evil of female foeticide in order to also improve the adverse sex ratio in the country.

The States and UTs have confirmed that they are making concerted efforts to implement the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 to improve the adverse sex ratio. Under the Act Appropriate Authorities and Advisory Committees have been constituted in all States and UTs at State/UT and district levels. These statutory bodies have also been set up at sub-district levels in most of the major States.

On the basis of detailed investigation undertaken by the Appropriate Authorities and press reports, 216 cases have been filed in the various Courts / with Police in various States/UTs. 107 ultrasound machines of unregistered clinics have also been seized and sealed by the Authorities for violation of the Act.

Anthrax cases in the country

3522. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the actual number of cases of Anthrax identified, so far, in the country, State-wise;

(b) the precautions/remedial measures taken by his Ministry to educate the general public in this regard; and

(c) whether his Ministry proposes to formulate any law against people who are spreading rumours about bacteria/bio-germs causing unnecessary panic among people?